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Lansing Region Leaders Celebrate 2nd Anniversary of President Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" Initiative

(LANSING) In November 2015, a small group of dedicated Lansing area champions for President Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" (MBK) Community Challenge met to determine one action they could take together to achieve any one of the six milestones. The six milestones are broad developmental outcomes designed to encourage cradle to career strategies to close gaps in outcomes for boys and young men of color and other youth being left behind. Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero accepted the My Brother's Keeper Challenge on behalf of the City of Lansing in October 2014, and in July of 2015, the Ingham County Board of Commissioners accepted the MBK Community Challenge by resolution, making Mayor's Young Lansing/My Brother's Keeper one of the first regional initiatives in the nation out of over 200 cities, counties and tribal nations.

President Obama and the White House lead the nation in celebrating the 2nd Anniversary of My Brother's Keeper as MY Lansing MBK prepares to take on one of the greatest challenges in the region's history, closing gaps in racial economic equity throughout the state. This would result in a return on investment to Michigan of at least \$28.9 billion in gross domestic product. The Lansing Metropolitan share in 2012 would have been \$1.19 billion if the region had closed its gaps, according to the National Equity Atlas published by PolicyLink and Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) at University of Southern California.

Ingham County Health Department, Ingham Great Start Collaborative, Lansing Community College, Capital Area Michigan Works!, and Lansing Police Department met in November 2015 and through group dialogue determined that no one program or policy change could hope to measurably improve the MBK Milestones. Through a process facilitated by MY Lansing MBK convener One Love Global Inc., the leaders agreed with Debbie Edokpolo, Deputy Health Officer for Ingham County Health Department's assessment, "Unless we are going to address the root cause of structural racism we can't hope to have a sustained impact on any milestone." The team unanimously agreed to prioritize the work of dismantling structural racism as their focus for 2016 and beyond.

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21st Century Policing and Black Lives Matter Lansing. At the MY Lansing My Brother's Keeper Anchor Team's second meeting, Lansing Police Chief Michael Yankowski elaborated on the commitment he has made for his officers at the Lansing Police Department to engage in a series of trainings and workshops designed to help law enforcement understand, identify and challenge implicit bias. Chief Yankowski partnered with Black Lives Matter Lansing to invite other regional law enforcement agencies to take a survey based on the 21st Century Policing recommendations published by the White House Task Force on 21st Century Policing in 2015. Chief Yankowski has been actively involved in law enforcement reform at the national level through the Police Executive Research Forum. The 3rd in a series of community forums will be held on March 24 from 6-8pm at Lansing Public Media Center (2500 S Washington Ave, Lansing, MI 48910) to learn about progress on the 21st Century recommendations and priorities of the community. The event is open to the public.

Milestone 6 prioritizes violence prevention and providing young people with a second chance who have come into contact with law enforcement and the courts. Lansing Police Department is partnering with Peckham Inc. on a grant for high risk youth. Peckham can serve approximately 100 young adults per year through job placement and other services. They work with 16 to 24-year-olds. Lansing Police Department will be placing violent crime priority youth offenders that meet the criteria for job opportunities. "Lansing Police Department is very excited to provide some of our troubled youth with a second opportunity to turn their lives around," said Chief Yankowski.

Summer Opportunity Initiative. MBK Milestone 5 focuses on ensuring youth successfully enter the workforce. To that end, the White House launched the Summer Opportunity Initiative to help local communities prepare to close the summer "opportunity gap" which can contribute to gaps in achievement, employment, and college and career success, particularly for low-income students who lose access to critical supports that keep them safe, healthy and engaged during the school year. Research shows that Black and Hispanic teenage boys lag behind their peers in summer employment and year-round jobs. This employment gap broadens as young men get older, making them the highest percentage of the nearly seven million youth (16-24) disconnected from school and work. Summer opportunities have been shown to divert youth from criminal involvement and reduce overall violence, and they also offer a chance for young people to get their first exposure to the workplace and build financial skills that they can build on throughout their lives.

MY Lansing MBK was selected to participate in a partnership between the White House and LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network on the Internet. LinkedIn will connect millions of small and medium sized business leaders with local and state organizations to help young people, including those who are not in school or working, access summer jobs in 72 cities. LinkedIn will also amplify the importance of summer jobs with a content series featuring top business influencers, beginning with the [President's LinkedIn Influencer post](#) on the topic of "My First Job."

The MY Lansing MBK Mentoring Network. The MBK Mentoring Network is one of the primary partners in the Summer Opportunity Initiative and the first of its kind in the region. The Network is seeded with federal funding from the Corporation for National & Community Service via Michigan Community Service Commission, and the support of AmeriCops Volunteers in Service to America. The Mentoring Network will focus on exposing youth of color to career pathways and work experience, connecting young people to opportunities to serve their community, and providing youth development organizations with evidence-based practices for improving outcomes for boys of color. The Network is currently in development and facilitated by Willard Walker and Rich Lewis of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and Andrew Brewer of Men Making a Difference Inc.

For information or to get involved with Mayor's Young Lansing/My Brother's Keeper contact angela@oneloveglobal.org. Visit www.mylansingmbk.org to review the MY Lansing MBK 1-Year Report and learn about efforts to mobilize MBK Communities in Michigan for statewide impact on Michigan's economy.